

Washington can change the mood of the country for the better.

We're also moving ahead with an important legislative agenda. There were some last summer who said there's no way anyone could possibly get a tax relief plan through the Congress. Yet the House and the Senate have now both endorsed significant tax relief and are headed toward a final vote. Tax relief is an important principle.

The Federal Government is taking more money than it needs out of the pockets of the people, and we need to return some. Yet tax relief is also an important part of our economic strategy. It will accelerate our economic growth and create more jobs and more opportunity. This has nothing to do with me or my political party. It has everything to do with what is right for the country.

The Senate committee responsible for education voted 20 to nothing in favor of a solid education reform bill. And we'll see results, too, from our initiative to welcoming charities and faith-based organizations into the work of helping Americans in need. We're at work on a plan to increase America's energy supply in the long term. At the same time, we are acting in a commonsense way to defend our environment. We are adopting new, scientifically sensible rules to discourage emissions of lead, to protect wetlands, to reduce the amount of arsenic in drinking water, to curb dangerous pesticides, and to clean the air of pollution from onroad diesel engines.

Internationally, we are building a more peaceful and open world. Our relationship with China is maturing. There will be areas where we can agree, like trade, and areas where we won't agree—Taiwan, human rights, religious liberty. And where we disagree, I will speak frankly.

But it's just as important for us to listen as it is to speak. A week ago, I attended the Summit of the Americas in Quebec City, where I met with the democratically elected leaders of Canada, Mexico, Central and South America, and the Caribbean. We talked about how we can handle common challenges—everything from education and the environment to drugs, energy, and trade. I said my piece, and I listened, as well. That's how good neighbors behave.

In nearly 100 days, we have made a good start. But it's only a start. On a number of important issues, we have laid the foundation for progress. Now we need to turn a good start and good spirit into good laws. And I urge the Congress to join me in seizing the opportunities of the next 100 days and beyond.

Thank you for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 10 a.m. on April 27 at the Bush Ranch in Crawford, TX, for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on April 28. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on April 27 but was embargoed for release until the broadcast.

Remarks at the White House Correspondents' Association Dinner

April 28, 2001

Thank you, Arlene. Laura and I are delighted to be here with all the major leaguers. [Laughter] Tonight I've decided to do something a little different. See, my mother, over the years, has put together at least 70 scrapbooks about our life as a family. What I've done is pull out some of the actual, never-before-seen photos from these scrapbooks and create a little slide show. [Laughter] And so, Gordon, if everybody's cell phones are turned off—[laughter]—you can hit the lights.

Tonight I present a Bush family album. What you may not realize is that I grew up at a time in Texas history when it was still a rough and tumble frontier. [Laughter] We were ranchers back then. [Laughter] This was my favorite horse. He was sure-footed, steady. I trusted that horse totally. And here's the really weird part: His name was Dick Cheney. [Laughter]

But times were hard back then. [Laughter] This, of course, was during the great drought of 1953. [Laughter] Dad, Neil, Doro, Marvin, and Jeb—in my family, with all those kids in the tub, it's not arsenic in the water I'd be worried about. [Laughter] Personally, I've always preferred a private bath. [Laughter]

This is my actual first-grade report card. Up top, it says, "George W. Bush." And then notice the final grades on the right: Writing, A; Reading, A; Spelling, A; Arithmetic, A;

Music, A; Art, A. So my advice is, don't peak too early. [Laughter]

Here, I am with my fifth-grade science project. [Laughter] Built it myself. And it's still meeting our energy needs. [Laughter]

I went on to college and graduate school, but somehow, the press has gotten the wrong idea, that I was a smart aleck party guy. [Laughter] This is an unfair perception. See, in college, I actually did a lot of independent reading. [Laughter]

After graduation I joined the Texas Air National Guard. I'm the one who committed the State of Texas to defend Taiwan from attack. [Laughter] Speaking of pilots, I'm so proud and honored to welcome to our Nation's Capital, Lieutenant Shane Osborn and crewmember Lieutenant J.G. John Comerford. I hope you and your crew will be coming to the White House soon. I think you'll like it there. [Laughter] I know I've said this to you personally on the phone, but I'm proud to say it publicly, welcome back, Lieutenant.

Some people wondered—and I'm sure there might have been a few out here—how I would handle the recent incident in China. Truth is, I have long been a serious student of the Orient. [Laughter] My mom and dad, of course, were in China when Dad was the U.S. liaison there. People have asked me, "Is it difficult trying to follow in the footsteps of a man who was President, Vice President, U.N. Ambassador, a man who held so many other important jobs? Is it hard being such a man's son?" Not really. [Laughter]

Most people don't realize it, but Dad has had some tough times. [Laughter] Back in the fifties, he went through a period where he thought aliens were trying to contact him. [Laughter] So he built this contraption to receive their signals. [Laughter]

As for my mom, after bearing six children she herself became a bit stressed. [Laughter] She took to acting very strangely. [Laughter] For a while, she thought she was too tall and walked like this. [Laughter] As if that weren't strange enough, next she wrote a book with that damn, mangy, ill-tempered dog. [Laughter] I hated that dog. [Laughter] My mother treated the dog better than she treated me. [Laughter] She never helped me write my book. [Laughter]

I will say this, however, my mom always stuck up for us kids. Here's Mom replying to a reporter's question about something Barbra Streisand said recently. [Laughter]

Fortunately, I've got great brothers and a great sister. Some people have asked me, however, if the vote recount left any hard feelings between my brother Jeb and me? Not a bit. In fact, here's a picture of the Governor of Florida. [Laughter]

All this brings me to a seriouser point. [Laughter] Eventually, I met a woman named Laura Welch. She changed my life. She has given me as an adult what I enjoyed as a child, and that is a loving family. The defining moments in the Bush family are not when my father was elected President or when I was elected President. The defining moments have been family moments. Ladies and gentlemen, I've been blessed with a family that is full of love, and I pray the same for you.

Good evening.

NOTE: The President spoke at 8:30 p.m. in the Ballroom at the Washington Hilton. In his remarks, he referred to his parents, former First Lady Barbara Bush and former President George Bush, brothers Neil Bush, Marvin Bush, and Gov. Jeb Bush of Florida, sister, Dorothy Bush Koch; Arlene Dillon, president, White House Correspondents' Association; Assistant Press Secretary Gordon Johndroe; and entertainer Barbra Streisand.

Proclamation 7430—National Day of Prayer, 2001

April 27, 2001

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

Turning to prayer in times of joy and celebration, strife and tragedy is an integral part of our national heritage. When the first settlers landed on the rocky shores of the New World, they celebrated with prayer, and the practice has continued through our history. In 1775, the Continental Congress asked the citizens of the colonies to pray for wisdom in forming a Nation. General George Washington, encamped at Valley Forge, also sought God's guidance as Americans fought